



Las Vegas Cleanup a Sure Thing

LAS VEGAS, NV

In Las Vegas, Nevada, a former National Guard Armory has the distinction of being the country's first site cleaned up under EPA's Brownfields Cleanup Revolving Loan Fund (BCRLF) Pilot Program. The \$50,000 cleanup involved the removal of more than 600 cubic yards of soil contaminated with hazardous waste and petroleum hydrocarbons. A community center, cultural center, retail stores, and a small business incubator are now planned for the site.

"The Brownfields Cleanup Revolving Loan Fund helps local governments sweep away the last obstacle to redevelopment of abandoned industrial properties contamination," explains Felicia Marcus, EPA's Region 9 Administrator. "This project demonstrates EPA's and the City of Las Vegas' commitment to getting Brownfields sites in the downtown Las Vegas area cleaned up and ready for reuse. We applaud Las Vegas for getting the job done so quickly."

To date, EPA has awarded 68 BCRLF Pilots. The purpose of these Pilots is to enable states, cities, and Native American tribes to make low-interest loans to promote the cleanup and redevelopment of brownfields properties. The program has already leveraged more than \$50 million in redevelopment funding from the BCRLF loans issued to date. The City of Las Vegas was selected as a BCRLF Pilot in May 1999 and received \$500,000; the city loaned \$50,000 to the Las Vegas Redevelopment Agency to enable cleanup of the Armory site. Covering a two-year period, the loan has an annual interest rate of only two percent.

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JUST THE FACTS:

- A 3.6-acre former National Guard Armory, used by the Nevada National Guard from 1948 to 1997, was returned to the city in late 1997.
- A Brownfields Assessment Pilot grant from EPA enabled the city to conduct soil and groundwater sampling at the former Armory site.
- In May 1999, the City of Las Vegas was selected as a BCRLF Pilot by EPA and awarded \$500,000, a portion of which was used to clean up the former Armory site.

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*—Felicia Marcus,
EPA's Region 9 Administrator*

EPA's Brownfields Economic Redevelopment Initiative is designed to empower states, communities, and other stakeholders in economic redevelopment to work together in a timely manner to prevent, assess, safely clean up, and sustainably reuse brownfields. A brownfield is a site, or portion thereof, that has actual or perceived contamination and an active potential for redevelopment or reuse. EPA is funding: assessment demonstration pilot programs (each funded up to \$200,000 over two years), to assess brownfields sites and to test cleanup and redevelopment models; job training pilot programs (each funded up to \$200,000 over two years), to provide training for residents of communities affected by brownfields to facilitate cleanup of brownfields sites and prepare trainees for future employment in the environmental field; and, cleanup revolving loan fund programs (each funded up to \$500,000 over five years) to capitalize loan funds to make loans for the environmental cleanup of brownfields. These pilot programs are intended to provide EPA, states, tribes, municipalities, and communities with useful information and strategies as they continue to seek new methods to promote a unified approach to site assessment, environmental cleanup, and redevelopment.

The 3.6-acre former National Guard Armory was used by the Nevada National Guard from 1948 to 1997 for vehicle maintenance, chemical and supply storage, and general operations. The property was returned to the city in late 1997. The neighborhoods in the immediate vicinity of the Armory site are predominantly Hispanic, with high unemployment and poverty rates. Las Vegas City Councilman Gary Reese stated, "We at the City of Las Vegas firmly believe in providing clean and safe neighborhoods, free of contaminants and pollutants, for our residents. Through a shared vision and strong partnership with EPA, the city was able to fast track our efforts to become the first in the nation to clean up a brownfields site under the BCRLF program." Through the site's small business incubation center, the city hopes to provide opportunities for new community-based enterprises, as well as a community meeting place and cultural center.

EPA's partnership with the City of Las Vegas began in May 1998 when the city was awarded a \$200,000 Brownfields Demonstration Assessment Pilot grant. This assessment funding allowed the city to conduct soil and groundwater sampling at the Armory site. The sampling revealed that the contamination, diesel fuel and waste oil, was confined to about 600 cubic yards of soil located near where a hydraulic lift had been. The assessments also indicated that the groundwater was not contaminated. The results of these Phase I and II environmental assessments allowed the city and the Nevada Division of Environmental Protection to develop the recently completed cleanup plan.

The BCRLF bridged the gap between the environmental assessment and the eventual development of the Armory property by providing the city with the capital necessary to clean up the site.

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Visit the EPA Brownfields web site at:
<http://www.epa.gov/brownfields/>

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